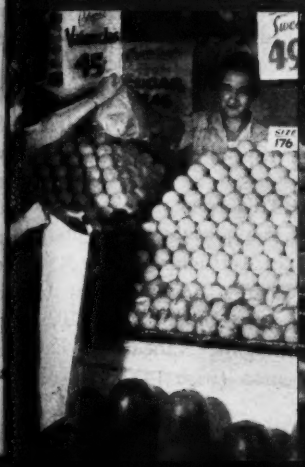
WS. 8

CONSUMERS' GUIDE

MAY 9, 1938



CONSUMERS' GUIDE

MAY 9, 1938 VOLUME V, NUMBER 3

A Publication of the

Agricultural Adjustment Administration
Consumers' Counsel Division
D. E. MONTGOMERY, Consumers' Counsel

Issued Every Two Weeks

Address all inquiries to the Editor, Consumers' Guide
U. S. Department of Agriculture . . . Washington, D. C.
MARY TAYLOR, Editor

FIGURES have a way of acting like shock troops in an attack on consumer problems. Hardly a shopper now alive who has not at some time or other had to march, bundle-laden, back to a store to return an unsatisfactory article. When the statisticians get to work, counting up these parades of unsatisfied customers, enumerating the reasons behind them, and measuring responsibility, the quantitative picture is something that makes sellers rub their eyeballs.

FIVE HUNDRED shoppers were questioned by 2 trade analysts on the merchandise they returned in 1937. When all the records were totaled up, it was found that these women reported a total of 5,371 "returns," an average of more than 10 to a shopper. They took blame for one-fifth of the returns they made; they blamed the stores for 4,357. Probing into the reasons why stores were burdened with so much blame, the researchers found that 20 percent of the goods went back because of "unsatisfactory fit." Analyzing the kind of merchandise that had to be carried back, they found that 13 percent were children's wear.

STANDARDIZING size of containers for foods, as we pointed out in our last issue, has been recognized for 300 years as sound common sense. Standardizing sizes of clothes is a 20th century goal and one of the most significant steps toward it is being taken right here in the Bureau of Home Economics of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

AT THE BOTTOM of consumers' confusion over the right size to buy is the simple fact that no one—in trade or out of it—knows the measurements which are needed to size garment patterns for humans. Years ago, soldiers returning from the World War were measured, but the data collected then are not usable as a basis for setting standard sizes for civilian clothes. Until the Bureau of Home Economics got to work, this was the only important study made of the facts needed for standardizing clothes sizes.

BITING OFF only one portion of the basic job to be done, this Bureau set out last year to get exact body measurements of a large number of children. Already over 44,000 boys and girls have been measured, with the help of colleges and institutions in 8 States. Before the study is finished there will be figures for probably twice that many children. Scrupulous care is taken to see that the children measured are representative of all the different geographic districts of the country. Their ages range from 4 to 14 years. Some are from well-to-do families, others from families not so well off. They even represent different racial strains. In every way, the final tabulations are expected to reveal a fair cross section of the size of American children.

MANUFACTURERS advised with the Bureau before the study was started. Among them it was decided that 36 measurements for each child were needed in designing a child's garment. The men and women doing the measuring are especially trained for their jobs by anthropometrists. An anthropometrist is someone who is trained in the science of measuring the human body. The measurers find that it takes about 15 minutes to complete each youngster—not long enough to tire out the child measured. He doesn't have to stand stiffly at attention or take uncomfortable positions while being measured. The purpose of measuring is to help manufacturers design comfortable, well-fitting clothing, so the children are measured in natural positions.

WHEN MEASUREMENTS are all in, tabulated, and analyzed, they will be used by standard-minded groups such as the American Standards Association and the American Home Economics Association in working out standards for sizes of children's garments. So, for the shoppers who are weary of having to shop by guess for readymade children's clothing, there is light on the not too distant horizon.

MORE BACKGROUND on this large problem of standardizing garment sizes can be had by interested students from the Consumers' Project, Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., which has pulled together important facts from every possible source in this field.

CREDIT for photographs appearing in this issue goes to: New York State College of Agriculture (pages 3, 4, 5); Farm Security Administration (page 8); Western Union (page 10, bottom); Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station (page 14).

FOR STUBBORN STAINS requiring application of chemicals use bowl method. Stretch stained material over bowl and apply chemicals in short quick applications with medicine dropper. When using a dilute acid, neutralize with a weak alkali and vice versa. Always rinse spot with water.

On the Spot

Know your fabrics, chemicals, and techniques if you want to cut cleaning costs by home doctoring of spots

FOR PEOPLE with elastic budgets it's easy to let the dry cleaners do the job but too many people have budgets that aren't that elastic. Becoming a skilled amateur in the cleaning and spot removal game is one way to keep the budget balanced and at the same time to keep the family's clothing in the pink of condition.

No snap assignment, this success comes to those who know a few basic facts about the effect of chemicals on different fabrics, and what kind of cleaning agent is best for removing stains caused by various substances. Also, one must exercise patience, care, and skill in using cleaning agents.

What caused the spot? What kind

of textile fibers is the stained material made of? Is the fabric washable? Is it colorfast? Correct answers to these questions plus prompt action and good technique in manipulating cleaning agents are the key to successful spot removal.

FACTS ABOUT FABRICS

Cotton and Linen

1. Strong acids dissolve cotton and linen fibers. Use only diluted acid solutions, followed by weak alkalis, and always rinse thoroughly.

2. Alkalis and hot water may be used but materials should not be exposed to them for too long a time.

3. Bleaching agents should be sparingly used, never in concentrated form or for long periods at a time (see color).

Wool and Silk

1. Never use strong alkalis on wool or silk.

2. Never use hot water on wool or silk.

3. Never rub wool or silk excessively.

4. Bleaching agents containing chlorine should not be used.

5. Dilute acids with the exception of nitric acid can be used.

Rayon

1. Handle carefully when wet, as water weakens fibers.

2. Diluted acids may be used.

3. Never use concentrated acids or strong alkalis.

4. Never use solutions containing acetone, chloroform or ether on acetate rayon.

Colored Materials

Always experiment with an unexposed portion of material—the hem or inside seam—before applying a chemical cleaning agent or bleach. Frequently they will attack dyestuffs, and one has to make a choice between a stained or faded spot. When using chemicals the work must be done rapidly and the material rinsed thoroughly. Sometimes a change in color due to an acid treatment can be restored by a weak alkali—either by holding the spot in the fumes from a bottle of household ammonia or sponging it with an ammonia solution. (See kit directions on page 5.) Acetic acid will often restore color that has been changed by alkalis.

FACTS ABOUT CLEANING AGENTS

Most agents are absorbents, solvents, or bleaches.

Absorbents

Fuller's earth, meal such as cornmeal, chalk, are harmless to all fibers and are easy to apply. Best results are obtained when the stain is fresh or still moist, and the absorbent powder is spread on the spot at once. Its action is like that of blotting paper. It takes up the stain.

Solvents

These are substances which dissolve others. Use water as a solvent whenever possible. Even spots on unwashable materials can sometimes be sponged off with water.

Boiling water poured from a height of three or four feet on a stained colorfast or white cotton or linen material is especially effective for removing fresh coffee, tea, and fruit stains. The force of the hot water poured from a height will frequently drive out the stain. Hold stained portion taut by fastening it over a bowl with an elastic band.

Carbon tetrachloride is the base of many noninflammable commercial grease solvents and is safe to use on all fibers. Other solvents are alcohol, ether, gasoline, naphtha, kerosene, glycerine, chloroform, turpentine. The first 5 mentioned are inflammable. It is not wise to use them in the home.

Pad and Sponge Method is a good technique to use when applying grease solvents, or when removing stains which dissolve readily. Brush off all dirt. Turn stained material inside out. Place it on a clean absorbent pad. Dip sponging cloth in cleaning fluid, press out excess moisture, then apply to stain

TO AVOID RINGS forming (1) use solvent sparingly, (2) blow on material as you work.

in light strokes working from the outside towards the center of the spot, letting strokes taper in every direction to prevent a ring forming. Blow on spot as you work to hasten drying process. Change absorbent pad and sponge cloth frequently. When applying solvent to colored materials, use a sponge of the same material, if possible.

Bleaches

Substances that whiten or remove color. Sunlight is the simplest and safest of all bleaches but is not always on tap. Other bleaches are lemon juice, lemon juice and salt, acetic acid, ammonia, borax, Javelle water, oxalic acid, peroxide of hydrogen, potassium permanganate, sodium hydrosulphite, sodium thiosulphite. Many of these bleaches are chemicals and when used, the work must be done as rapidly as possible.

Choose one of these two methods when using chemicals to remove stubborn stains:

Bowl Method: Stretch the material over a bowl of lukewarm water, holding it in place by elastic band. If the agent you are using is soluble in water the stained material should first be moistened with water before applying the agent with a medicine dropper to the spot. Use separate medicine droppers for acid and for alkali solution. If acid solution is applied first, follow immediately by alkali solution—or vice versa. After the spot has been removed, rinse material thoroughly.

Rod Method: Place stained portion on absorbent pad. Apply alkali and acid with glass rod with blunted ends. Rinse thoroughly.

RINGS—THEIR CAUSE AND CURE

Rings appear for various reasons: The chemical may tighten the fibers causing a change in texture. Dressing in the fabric may run back to the edge of the damp portion and be deposited there as the fabric dries. A third reason may be that the stain has not been fully flushed out. Maybe too much solvent has been used, or the solvent has not evaporated quickly enough.

To Avoid Rings

1. Use light strokes, working from outside stain to center and spread or "feather" the liquid into the fabric surrounding the treated section until there is no definite edge where the material dries.

2. Do not use too much solvent at a time.

3. Blow on stain when working. Brush material with a dry rag. Finish drying process by hanging material in stiff breeze or before electric fan.

4. Use the same type of material for sponge as the stained material.

5. Work rapidly, but get all the stain out.

To Make Water Rings Disappear:

1. Turn material right side up and rub edge of the ring lightly with fingernail, edge of spoon or coin, or rub material between two hands.

2. Steam out. Put a small quantity of water in a tea kettle, tie a piece of cheesecloth over the spout. Allow water to come to boil. Hold ringed spot over the spout until it is moist. Shake dry, and press. The cheesecloth prevents water from escaping from teakettle and spotting the fabric.

TOWARD A FIRST AID CLEANING KIT

This list may be contracted or expanded depending on how thoroughly one is going into the spot removing game. Some of the materials are poison. They should be clearly marked and kept in a safe place.

Absorbent cloths
White blotters
Medicine droppers
Glass rod rounded at both ends
Medium size bowl
Soap
Ammonia—10 percent chemically

[*Concluded on page 18*]

RINGS are sometimes removed by (1) rubbing the edges with the side of a coin, (2) holding the ring against the spout of a teakettle of boiling water. First tie cheesecloth to the spout to keep water drops from staining the fabric.

SPOT PRESCRIPTIONS

Your guide to the best methods and remedies for spot removal. Tack near your cleaning cabinet or kit

ALL SPOTS 1. Analyze the stain. A complex stain may require the use of 2 or more cleaning agents. 2. Remove stain when it is fresh. 3. Use cleaning agents that will not injure materials. 4. Experiment with a cleaning agent on unexposed portions of material first. 5. Use agents sparingly, work rapidly. For more tips, write to the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1474, "Stain Removal from Fabrics," 5 cents.

ACIDS

If the fabric is washable, acid spots should be rinsed at once in a generous amount of water to check the action of the acid. To neutralize acid spot:

1. Apply a weak alkali to the spot. If the stain is slight, sometimes holding it in the fumes from a bottle of household ammonia is sufficient, otherwise apply dilute ammonia solution directly. If ammonia causes color change in fabric apply white vinegar.

2. Baking soda. Sprinkle on both sides of moistened material. Let stand till effervescence stops. Rinse thoroughly.

ALKALI

Spots should be removed at once with water or mild acid solution such as lemon juice, vinegar, or acetic acid. After application rinse material thoroughly.

BLOOD

Always use cold water on blood stain first.

Washable cotton and linens: soak in cold, wash in hot water.

Delicate fabrics: sponge with cold or lukewarm water. To remove last traces of blood stains, sponge with hydrogen peroxide to which a few drops of ammonia have been added.

Heavy materials: (blankets, etc.) Make a paste of raw starch and cold water. Apply to stain and brush off when dry. Repeat if necessary.

BUTTER AND BUTTER SUBSTITUTES

Always scrape off with blunt instrument as much of grease as possible.

Washable materials: Soap and hot water.

Other materials:

1. Carbon tetrachloride—pad method.

2. Fuller's earth. Put absorbent powder on both sides of material, allow to stand ½ hour, then brush off powder. Repeat if necessary.

CANDLE WAX

Scrape off as much wax as possible.

Washable materials: Rub spot with cold lard or turpentine, wash in warm suds.

Other fabrics: Place blotters on both sides of stain, press with warm iron, remove remaining grease with carbon tetrachloride or other grease solvent. If any color is left, sponge with denatured alcohol.

CHEWING GUM

Alternate treatment with carbon tetrachloride and water, or rub spot with ice.

CHOCOLATE AND COCOA

Washable materials: Soap and hot water. For remaining stain on white linen and cotton use Javelle water. For colored materials if dye is fast, soak stained portion in wood alcohol made alkaline with ammonia solution.

Non-washable materials: Carbon tetrachloride, pad method. For remaining stain, sponge with hydrogen peroxide.

COFFEE

Remove stains while fresh. It's much easier.

Washable cotton and linens: Pour boiling water on stain from a height of 2 or 3 feet.

Old stains may be bleached with potassium permanganate and oxalic acid—bowl method.

All colorfast fabrics: Moisten spot with warm glycerine. When spot disappears wash out glycerine in warm suds.

Non-washable materials: Apply glycerine, pad method, then steam out glycerine.

If it is a cream-coffee stain, use carbon tetrachloride or other grease solvent first.

DYES AND RUNNING COLORS

Ease with which dyes can be removed depends on the nature of the dye. Hydrosulphites are most satisfactory for general purposes. (See kit directions on page 5.)

Dye stains may sometimes be removed by soaking in warm or cold water 10 or 12 hours, then bleaching in the sun.

For white wool and silk: Soak in hydrogen peroxide solution made slightly alkaline with ammonia solution. Rinse thoroughly.

EGG

Cold water first. (Hot water hardens egg stain making it difficult to remove.)

Washable colorfast materials: Follow cold rinse by washing in hot water.

Other fabrics: Sponge with cold water. Allow stain to dry, then use grease solvent, pad method.

COOKED FRUITS AND BERRIES

Do not use soap; it is apt to "set" the stain.

Washable colorfast materials:

Fresh stains—boiling water from a height.

Old stains:

1. Bleach with Javelle water (use on white cotton and linen only).

2. Alternate treatment of oxalic acid and ammonia. May be used on other fabrics if carefully done. Experiment first.

FRESH FRUITS AND BERRIES

Washable cotton and linen:

1. Boiling water.

2. Moisten stain with lemon juice. Put in bright sunlight.

3. Oxalic acid, ammonia solution, boiling water—bowl method is effective for blue-gray stain which does not come out with boiling water.

Silk and wool and colored fabrics:

Spread material over bowl of hot steaming water to which a few drops of ammonia have been added. Apply hydrogen peroxide with medicine dropper at about five minute intervals. This treatment may fade colors. Experiment first.

GRASS, DANDELIONS, OTHER FOLIAGE

Washable materials: Hot water, soap, rubbing stain vigorously. On white cotton and linen bleach out remaining stain with Javelle water or potassium permanganate.

Other fabrics except acetate rayon: Use ether or wood or denatured alcohol, pad method. (Alcohol affects some dyes. Experiment first.)

GREASE AND OILS

Always scrape off as much grease as possible from stained material then use one of three methods, depending on nature of fabric.

Washable materials: Warm water and soap. Soap containing naphtha or kerosene is especially efficient.

Other methods:

Absorbents are effective only on oil and grease spots that are not mixed with dirt or metal. They are convenient to use on rugs and other heavy materials.

Delicate fabrics: 1. Spreading paste of white absorbent powder and a solvent is effective in removing a spot from light colored unwashable materials.

2. Carbon tetrachloride or other grease solvent, using pad method. To prevent grease spreading use small quantities of solvent at a time. Rub spot with clean cloth until thoroughly dry.

INDELIBLE PENCIL

White cotton and linen: Javelle water.

Other materials: If stain has not been moistened with water, soak in denatured wood alcohol. Sponge out remaining marks with soap and water.

INK

(Chemical composition of inks vary. Some are impossible to remove.)

Marking ink (silver nitrate type which must be exposed to sun or ironed before articles which are marked with them are washed).

For white cotton and linen: Javelle water—bowl method. Then soak in ammonia solution.

Printing Ink:

Washable materials—soap and water; rub thoroughly, or rub lard into stained fibers and then use soap and water.

Delicate fabrics: Soak for a few minutes in turpentine, sponge out with chloroform, ether, or wood alcohol. (Turpentine may affect some dyes. Do not use before experimenting.)

Writing Ink: Try several methods. Start with the simplest and one the least likely to injure a fabric.

Absorbent: Work absorbent around with blunt instrument. Renew absorbent when it becomes soiled. When ink no longer comes up with dry absorbent make it into a paste with water, and apply again.

Soap and Water: Often satisfactory, if material is washable.

Milk: Soak stains for a day or two, changing the milk as it becomes discolored. (Raw milk is more effective than pasteurized milk.)

Oxalic Acid: Soak stains for a few seconds in a saturated solution of oxalic acid, rinse in clear water and then in water to which a few drops of concentrated ammonia has been added.

Potassium Permanganate: (See kit directions on page 5.) It may be used for many delicate materials.

Javelle Water: On white cotton and linen only.

Commercial Ink Removers: Follow directions carefully and after treatment thoroughly rinse material.

Sodium Perborate: Effective in removing some red ink stains. Soak stain for one or two days if necessary in cold saturated solution.

IODINE

Remove when fresh—it's much easier.

Washable materials: Soap and water will remove fresh stain.

Other Fabrics:

1. Denatured or wood alcohol, pad method. (Affects some dyes. Experiment first.)

2. Sodium thiosulphate ("hypo") or a solution of sodium sulphite. Immerse stain in a solution containing 1 tablespoon of this chemical to 1 pint of water.

IRON RUST

White materials:

1. Put stained fabric over bowl of boiling water, squeeze lemon juice on the spot. Allow juice to remain for a few minutes. Rinse. Repeat the process.

2. Sprinkle the stain with salt, moisten with lemon and place in the sun. Add more juice if necessary.

3. Tartaric acid: Boil the stained place in a solution of 1 teaspoon of the acid to 1 pint of water until the stain disappears. Rinse thoroughly.

Colored materials: One of the above may work, but experiment first with unexposed portion of material.

LEAD PENCIL

Washable materials: (except wool) soap and water and vigorous rubbing.

Delicate fabrics: Immerse stain, place in small bowl containing chloroform or other organic solvent. Brush gently with soft brush or cloth.

Stiff and starched materials: soft eraser.

MEAT JUICE AND GRAVY

Remove protein spot with cold water, then use grease solvent, pad method.

MILDEW

(Mildew spots must be treated when fresh if injury to the fabric is to be avoided.)

1. Soap and water and drying in the sun will remove them.

Washable fabrics:

2. Slight stains: soak in sour milk overnight, bleach in sun, or moisten stain with lemon juice and salt and bleach in sun.

3. Old stains on white linen and cotton: bleach out with Javelle water.

MUSTARD

Washable materials: Soap and water.

Delicate fabrics: Warm glycerine or hydrosulphite.

PAINTS

Oil Paints, Varnishes, and Enamels—

Washable materials:

Fresh stains:

1. Soap and water and vigorous rubbing.

2. Turpentine—either sponge stain or wash whole article in solvent.

Old stains:

1. Rub lard into the stain. Then wash with soap and water. 2. Moisten stain with ammonia solution. Sprinkle with turpentine, roll article up for 15 to 80 minutes. Soak for several hours then wash with warm soap and water.

Delicate fabrics: Sponge or soak entire article in carbon tetrachloride, chloroform, or benzol.

Alcohol Paints or Stains—

Fresh stains:

Washable materials: Soap and water.

Delicate fabrics: Wood or denatured alcohol, pad method.

Old stains: Soak stain for half an hour in strong ammonia then wash.

Water Color Paints:

Washable materials: Soap and water.

Delicate fabrics:

1. Sponge stain with turpentine to remove water color, then with benzol to remove turpentine.

2. Dip in gasoline.

3. Sponge with glycerine then with lukewarm water.

SCORCH

Washable cotton and linen: Wet spot with water and expose to sun as long as necessary.

Any white fabric: Dampen a white cotton cloth with hydrogen peroxide and place over the stain. Place a clean dry cloth over it and then press with a medium warm iron. Caution: do not iron directly on the cloth moistened with peroxide. Rust stains on the garment would be the result.

Woolen material: brush lightly with emery paper.

TAR, ROAD OIL, AXLE GREASE

Washable materials:

1. Sponge or immerse in carbon tetrachloride, then launder.

2. Rub lard thoroughly into stain and wash with hot soap and water.

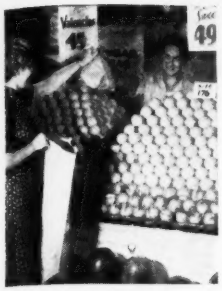
Other fabrics: Carbon tetrachloride. Immersion or pad method.

Carpets: Scrub with cloth soaked in solvent.

St

FRUI
marke
vest g
the fa
fruits
ing, g
after t
lap ma
Some
buy fr
produc
their
atives
and th
table
chain-s
someti
throug

Som
local s
lots th
each
shippe
commi
produc
buyers
city ca
produc
on his
mercha
of the
days o
taste f
with a
with st



Starting Fruits and Vegetables to Market

Second lap of our consumer tour from farm to market follows these foods through auctions, cooperatives, and marketing controls

FRUITS and vegetables are raced to market in relays the moment the harvest gun goes off. The first runner is the farmer who usually rushes the fruits to the packing house for cleaning, grading, sorting, and packing. But after the race is under way the second lap may take any of several directions. Some chain-store marketing agencies buy fruits and vegetables right in the producing centers and shortcut them to their city warehouses. Farm cooperatives pick up the fruits and vegetables and then ship them to fruit and vegetable dealers in the city, or else to chain-store marketing agencies. Or sometimes they sell to city dealers through a private auction company.

Sometimes the second runner is a local shipper who assembles into carlots the small quantities belonging to each individual farmer. This local shipper sells produce for farmers on a commission basis, or he purchases produce outright and then resells it to buyers of carloads of produce in the city called carlot receivers. If he buys produce outright and ships it to market on his own account he is known as a merchant shipper, a name reminiscent of the merchant adventurers who in the days of Queen Elizabeth combined a taste for adventure and exploration with an eye to the profits in trading with strange people in distant lands.

Adventuresome, too, are some of the exploits of merchant shippers today. When California grapes, for example, begin to hang heaviest in their green and purple bunches during September and October these shippers walk into a grower's vineyard, look it over with an arithmetical eye and then buy his whole *crop* as it hangs. Merchant shippers themselves in these cases then pick, pack, and ship the crop. Some Florida oranges, too, go to market under the flags of merchant shippers.

● LETTUCE GROWERS, who usually produce thousands of heads of lettuce on vast acreages maintain their own packing houses, ship carloads of lettuce directly from their lettuce fields to carlot receivers in the city. These producers, and in some cases cantaloup and other fruit and vegetable growers, are not growers in overalls as city consumers picture them. They are, rather, middlemen who have reached back into production to complete their control of a phase of distribution. An analogy more familiar to consumers might be the chain store which has purchased a factory. While in the manufacturing business, essentially it retains its character as a retail distributor. Thus one of the largest lettuce growers is a corporation with headquarters in a downtown Pittsburgh office building.

Farmers and cooperatives shipping fruits and vegetables to city markets under their own colors either ship to commission merchants, auction houses, or carlot receivers. Commission merchants, as their name indicates, sell on a commission basis, deduct handling and selling charges from whatever they receive for the fruits and vegetables they have sold, and send the remainder back to the shipper. Carlot receivers, with whom negotiations are carried on by wire or telephone, buy from the shipper on the basis of grades, subject to a final inspection on arrival.

No hard and fast distinctions exist in the markets between carlot receivers, or commission men, or merchant shippers. One company might perform the functions of each one of these factors in fruit and vegetable distribution. Bureau of Agricultural Economics officials, for example, license fruit and vegetable dealers. When they first began, however, they tried to license them as carlot receivers, as brokers, and as jobbers, but there was so much overlapping they gave up in despair the task of making distinctions. Instead, today, they issue one license to all fruit and vegetable dealers. Distinctions, they decided, are functional, and are not hard and fast distinctions between the various dealers themselves.

A KANSAS CITY broker here talks about lettuce by wire in cryptic trade language to a shipper in the State of Washington. "SMITH PASSED AS ARRIVES TOO LATE THIS WEEK HOWEVER SOLD JONES 1.65 FOB TOPICE EXTRA NP 93966 LET COME XPX NP 903971 SELL ARRIVAL OKAY."

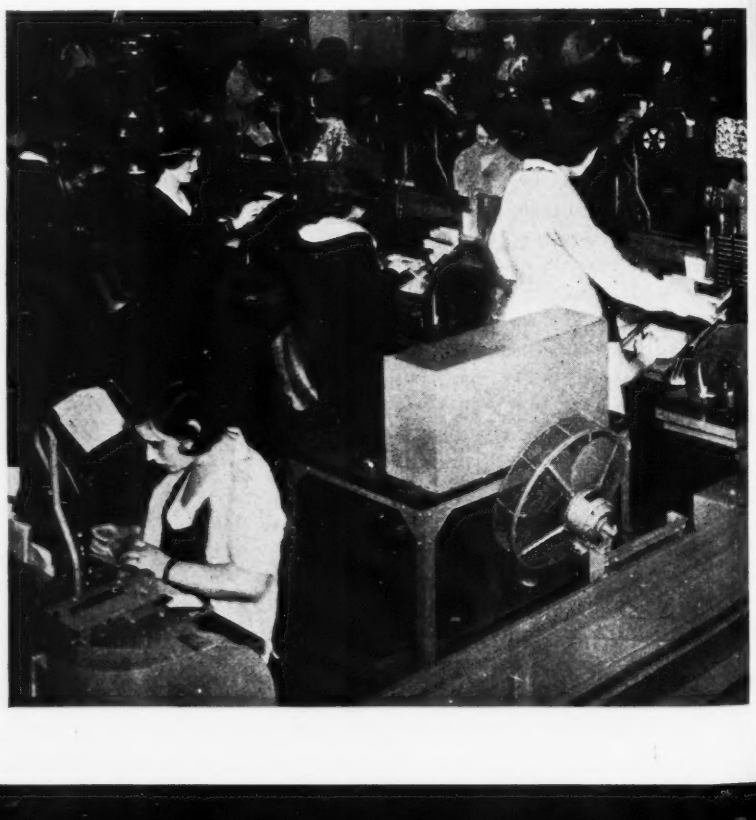
To avoid criticism from growers and country shippers who receive less at auction sales than they expected, auction houses refuse to take shipment of produce from farmers, but insist instead that the farmer ship to his own representative who then appears at the auction and keeps an eye open in the shipper's interest. Cooperatives, which use the auction method most frequently, usually have paid representatives at each auction, who if the bids seem too low, withdraw the produce from sale and then attempt to resell it later when the market is firmer.

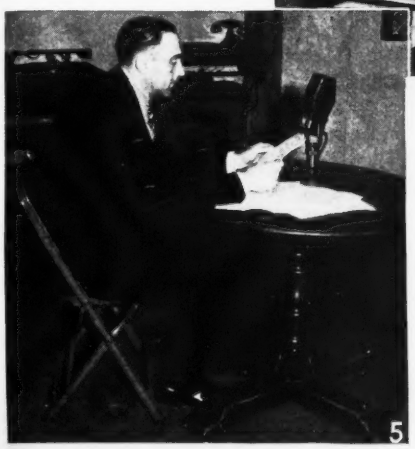
● LOUISIANA STRAWBERRIES are sold at auctions held during harvest time in the producing centers. Sometimes the total daily harvest of strawberries is not completely sold at the auction. Then because strawberries are perishable and must go to market sold or unsold before they spoil, they are shipped anyway. As soon as these strawberries begin to roll north unsold, telegraph and teletype wires flash bids back and forth in what is called an FOB auction. A signal is flashed to offices where buyers gather in every city along the way, describing the car and inviting bids. Then the bids start to sputter in. Chicago bids against New York, Philadelphia raises Detroit, Kansas City ups the bid, and then finally somewhere along the way the car is knocked down to one of the telegraphic bidders. Instructions go out to the railroad and the refrigerator car is routed to the high man. Potatoes, grapes, lettuce, most fruits and vegetables roll unsold in this manner sometimes.

California oranges are marketed largely through cooperatives. The grower delivers his oranges to the cooperative packing house in his locality where the oranges are washed, sorted, graded, waxed, and packed in refrigerator cars. This cooperative, however, usually belongs to a central cooperative marketing organization which arranges for the shipment and sale of the oranges. If the destination, for example, is Chicago, then the oranges go to Chicago where they are auctioned off under the eye of a cooperative representative. Proceeds from the sale of the oranges are then passed back through the various cooperatives until finally they reach the local grower's pool. Out of this pool, each grower is paid an amount based upon the number of oranges of each grade he has supplied his co-op. He is then paid a flat rate for all oranges of a particular grade and size and not an amount based upon the money received for his particular shipment of oranges.

● THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION, which is sometimes used by Congress to find out what's at the bottom of the price quotations and the market statistics most people skip over in the newspaper, last year completed a

JUST AS THE BODY depends upon the nervous system to relay messages to the brain, the fruit and vegetable economy depends upon the cables laid underneath America and the wires strung along its highways and railroads to bring buyers and sellers together, to make bids, to reject bids, to bargain, to consummate sales, and to direct shipments.





NERVE CENTER OF NEWS GATHERING is the Department of Agriculture, plus local and State government agencies. Government observers (1) go to markets, watch incoming supplies and prices, phone or telegraph into a field office of the Department which flashes (2) the news to Washington. There it is analyzed (3), then prepared for distribution (4) to newspapers, other agencies, and back to field offices. Radio (5) carries it out over the country to keep farmers, dealers, and shippers informed on crop conditions, fruit and vegetable movements, and prices.

study of principal farm products. Originally they omitted fruits and vegetables from this study. Said the Commission, while fruits and vegetables altogether might be important, no single fruit or vegetable can be classified as a principal farm product. Then people began to write in—growers, distributors, Chambers of Commerce. They all wanted the FTC to turn its searchlight on fruits and vegetables. One of the things they wanted to know was whether or not any company or any group of companies had a hand on the fruit and vegetable market comparable to the grip that some milk companies had on some milk markets.

"Significant proportions of the country's production of certain fruits and vegetables are handled by only a few large corporations and cooperatives," the Federal Trade Commission answered, but "The concentration of control," it explained, is "more pronounced in particular production areas and certain terminal markets."

● STATISTICS on concentration and control can be either impressive or unimpressive, depending upon what they are compared with, very much as a man looks tall photographed beside a midget and short photographed beside a giant.

America's largest chain store company, for example, has a subsidiary which is America's largest fruit and vegetable handler. Quantities of fresh fruits and vegetables pass into the warehouses of the chain-store system through this company. It handled in 1935 from 1.95 percent of the total 1935 peach production to 7.46 percent of the total 1935 onion production.

Offhand, such statistics might appear to be rather short handles for the control of fruits and vegetables. But while it is true the handle is too short to swing control of the total U. S. production, it is long enough to enable a company to go into a particular region and greatly influence the price of a particular commodity there.

Other companies besides the chain-store companies have control of significant phases of fruit and vegetable marketing. Measuring the control of an independent marketing company, the Federal Trade Commission discovered that it handled anywhere from one-half percent of the national cabbage harvest to 8 percent of the na-

[Continued on page 18]

12 Cooperative Structure

Here is how consumers operating a $182,000,000 annual business attend to their wants through local, regional, and national organization

SOME 3,600 retail cooperative societies all over the country were engaged in 1936 in operating stores, buying clubs, and gas stations for their 677,000 members, report Government census takers in the Bureau of Labor Statistics, after the most nearly complete enumeration ever made of United States consumer co-ops.

This total of 3,600 includes almost 1,200 farmers' organizations engaged in the collective purchase of consumer goods, chiefly groceries and household needs. It does not include the many hundreds of societies which buy only goods used for production on the farm—feed, seed, fertilizer, etc. Nor do the 3,600 count cooperatives supplying various services, which in 1936 included some 3,700 telephone associations with 330,000 members; 35 housing cooperatives providing for 2,200 families; 42 burial societies with 27,000 members; 5,500 credit unions with 1,200,000 members; or 260 rural electricity co-ops (in June, 1937) serving 161,000 farm families. The numbers of some types of these societies have increased considerably since 1936.

Among them, these 3,600 societies did about 182 million dollars' worth of business during 1936. The structure of a business of this size is worth observing.

Just as individual consumers have formed these cooperative associations to get things they need at retail, so the local societies have joined to form large regional wholesales obtaining commodities in volume directly from the producer. Some of the regional associations themselves collaborate to form other central organizations for greater volume and economy in purchasing.

There has thus developed an extensive cooperative structure which at one end touches the home of farmer or city worker, and at the other, the factory or processing plant which produces the wanted goods. The growth of this structure has followed no uniform plan.

● OUR COUNTRY is big; American cooperatives are young. The cooperative method still leans heavily on trial and error. The cooperative structure is still in a state of flux; it is only slowly hardening into a mold.

In some sections cooperatives have found it best to form local federations to handle goods which they do not wish to handle themselves—most commonly gasoline. Elsewhere, they have purchased direct from their own central organizations. Federations have been formed by the local societies not only for more economical purchasing, but to provide special services such as trucking, warehousing, burial service, garage service, and production of certain commodities. Joint organizations have sometimes been established—often by the same societies—to guide cooperative educational work. In other cases educational work is performed by the wholesales along with their buying.

Flexibility marks the cooperative method; variety marks the cooperative structure.

Basic to the structure is the local society. There individual member and families trade. There they control policies by their votes in membership meetings—one vote to a member, regardless of number of shares owned. On the shares they hold, members receive a modest fixed interest. What savings the cooperative makes for its members, they divide among themselves periodically in proportion to their purchases from the cooperative. These are the principles of what is generally called "Rochdale" cooperation, accepted the world over as the way for consumer cooperatives to do business.

Other usages are widespread, following their success in the pioneer society established in 1844 by the 28 weavers in Rochdale, England. These practices are membership open to anyone who applies in good faith, cash trading, religious and political neutral-

TRAINING of employees and executives for the cooperative movement combines practice with study. Here students of the Cooperative College, national training institute in New York City, take a hand at storekeeping.

ity, setting aside of reserves for education. But they have not been frozen into "principles."

Of the 3,600 retail units in the American consumer cooperative picture, about 1,150 are gas and oil stations. Two-thirds are stores and buying clubs.

In a buying club, the members simply pool their requirements and buy at wholesale, placing their orders in advance. This often gives members the experience of working together, and a start toward a full-time store. The buying club is easy to operate, involves almost no investment of capital, and offers the possibility of some savings and some control of quality without financial hazard. Buying clubs are growing, chiefly in cities and towns.

Finally, the 3,600 comprise 50 societies of unusual types, such as creameries, water-supply associations and bakeries.

Natural next step, when a number of retail societies are functioning in a region, is to get together for wholesale buying. In most European countries, one national wholesale serves all the country's local co-ops. England's wholesale first came into existence in 1863; Scotland's goes back to 1868. America's vast extent has developed a number of regional wholesales, rather than one national wholesale.

About half of the 3,600 local co-ops are joined in 30 odd wholesale buying associations. A score of these are regional wholesales taking all or parts of several States as their trading areas. Some of them overlap, since their member societies are sponsored by competing farm organizations—Farm Bureau, Grange, Farmers' Union.

Only cooperative associations can belong to the wholesales. The 20 regional wholesales have about 1,700 local members. In addition, about 600 co-ops which are not members do some buying through these wholesales.

Member societies do not buy all their goods from the co-op wholesales. One reason is that the local societies shop around. Another reason is that the wholesales are not in a position to supply all goods. Some commodities, like fresh fruits and vegetables, milk and meats, must be purchased locally. Stores and buying clubs obtain some of these commodities from other cooperative sources, such as cooperative creameries.

● SOME of the wholesales operate stores as retail branches. But such retail branches number less than 200 in all. In several localities, local cooperators are organizing to take over the operation of these retail stores. Cooperative theory frowns upon such top down organization.

Growth and control from the bottom up are the co-op ideal. Greater efficiency may be argued for centralized management—as by the chain stores. Democracy, flexibility and member loyalty are claimed by cooperators for their decentralized control.

Ownership and direction of the wholesales ultimately vest in the individual cooperators who control the local societies. In some of the wholesales, voting control is on the basis of one vote to a member society, regardless of shares held or amount purchased through the wholesale. In others, the local gets additional votes in the wholesale in proportion to its membership or its purchases from the wholesale.

Most of the big wholesales are in the Mid-West. In cooperative purchasing (barring selling activity) the Ohio Farm Bureau Cooperative Association reported a volume of $6,000,000 in 1937; Indiana's Farm Bureau co-op wholesale, $6,640,000. The Farmers' Union Central Exchange, with offices in St. Paul, Minnesota, handled over $4,500,000 worth of goods. The Consumers' Cooperative Association, North Kansas City, Missouri, did almost $4,000,000 worth of business. The Midland Cooperative Wholesale, Minneapolis, dealing exclusively in gas and oil and related products, ran up sales of $3,700,000. The Central Cooperative Wholesale, Superior, Wisconsin, registered a volume of $3,350,000 last year, its twentieth year of business.

Covering smaller areas than the regional wholesales, are 9 district wholesales in Michigan, Minnesota and Wis-

FARM FAMILIES have been leaders in cooperative purchasing of house supplies as well as farm supplies. Illustrating a growing interest of city folks in co-ops, is this little Evanston, Illinois, store. It operates a dairy truck for deliveries to its 400 members.

COOPERATIVE WHOLESALES are formed by local societies for economies in volume purchasing and for control of quality. Production and processing by these federations, not extensively developed, occurs mainly in lubricating oil and feeds. One mid-western wholesale, serving 111 member societies, operates its own bakery and its own coffee roasting plant.

consin, each serving local cooperatives in one or more counties. Most prominent are the Range Cooperative Federation in Minnesota, and Cooperative Services in northern Wisconsin.

Some of these wholesales trade in a single commodity. A number of store groups are thus federated for the joint buying of gas and oil. In many cases, all these local stores are also members of a regional wholesale from which they purchase their other commodities.

Wholesales have in some instances gone into partnership with other cooperative wholesales for the purchase or production of a single type of goods—such as gas and oil, or farm machinery.

● APPROACHING a national status, are two "interregional" wholesales. One is United Cooperatives (formerly the Farm Bureau Oil Co.) with offices in Indianapolis. United buys petroleum products for farmers' co-ops in 9 States, and operates its own oil blending plants. United Cooperatives is itself a member of the other interregional cooperative, National Cooperatives.

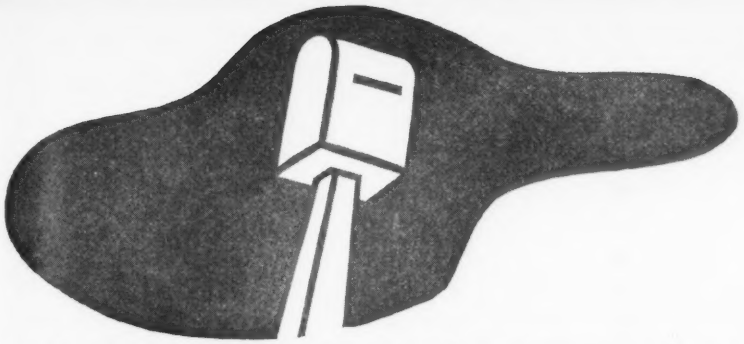
Ten wholesales, representing about 1,000 retail societies, pool their purchasing power in National Cooperatives. This organization, founded in 1933, acts as a broker. It negotiates master contracts under which goods—so far chiefly oil, electrical appliances, auto accessories, tractors, farm machinery—are put under the co-op label and delivered directly by manufacturers to the member regional wholesales.

Control of National Cooperatives rests with its stockholding member wholesales, in proportion to the volume of their purchases through it. The cooperative educational leagues and farm organizations advise on policies.

Not all local societies, however, join the federations which are open to them. About one-half at present prefer to go it alone.

● BUSINESS records of the cooperative associations which belong to wholesale and educational federations show an almost unbroken superiority over statements of the unaffiliated societies. Sales curves for the federated societies have been rising rather steadily; for the others, they have been rising much more slowly, or barely holding their own. In general, the current ratio of assets to liabilities is sounder for the federated societies.

[Concluded on page 19]



CONSUMERS' MAILBOX

"WHAT makes the difference in the price and quality of canned salmon?" queries a Georgia consumer.

Popular preferences are at the back of some of the differences in price. Consumers seem willing to put up more money for salmon that is rich in flavor, firm in flesh, and deep in color. What many consumers do not know is that there is little difference in food value between one species and another. Salmon is a good protein food and contains two important vitamins, A and D. Deep colored salmon, according to some authorities, may have more Vitamin A than the paler kinds. Aside from this possibility, nutritive values are much the same in all species, and on this score price is no index of better values.

Each species of salmon has its characteristic flavor, texture, and color. Consumer preference bestows top honors on Chinook, generally considered the aristocrat of the tribe. This kind of salmon is also known as King Salmon, Tyee Salmon, Quinnat Salmon, and Spring Salmon. It is best when caught in the spring (labeled "Spring" or "Fancy"). The fall catch ("Choice Salmon") is rated slightly under its spring relatives by salmon connoisseurs.

Red Salmon, second in price, sometimes is half as expensive as Chinook. Other names: Sockeye, and Blueblack. Coho Salmon (or Silver or Medium Red) sells for a few cents less than the Red brand. Pink Salmon (or Humpback) ranks fourth in price but outnumbers all the other clans in abundance. Cheapest of all is Chum Salmon, recognized by many as "Dog Salmon."

Labels titled "Alaska Salmon" or "Columbia River Salmon" are meaningless in indicating price or grade of the fish. They merely tell where the salmon was caught, perhaps.

Salmon usually reaches the consumer in one pound or half-pound cans. Careful buyers read labels before purchasing and compare net weights with prices of different brands.

●

FROM the Federal-State supervisor of egg grading in Ohio come some revealing figures on his experience of the past 5 years of grading. "There has been a steady increase in the demand for the official grading services from retail distributors and consumer organizations," he says. "These organizations as well as the consuming public have had egg quality and grading misrepresented to them so often when they made purchases of one dozen or one case of eggs that when they learn the United States Standards for egg grades do not change from one purchase to another they demand Government graded eggs."

Convincing support of this statement is found in a few statistics which he submits. The volume of graded eggs in Ohio rose from 750,000 dozens in 1935 to 1,305,300 dozens two years later—a jump of nearly 75 percent.

His report also carries a breakdown showing over a period of 5 years what proportion of the graded eggs fell into each classification. Some 43 out of every 100 graded eggs measure up to the requirements of "U. S. Extra," or "Retail Grade A," the kind that rates honors at breakfast. (An average of 36 of these are "Large," the remaining 7 "Medium" size.)

About 40 of each 100 graded eggs class as "U. S. Standard," or "Retail Grade B," recommended for cooking. (Of these 26 were "Large," the remaining 14 "Small.")

Another 8 of each 100 graded eggs usually grade "U. S. Trade," the quality suitable for dishes where egg flavor does not count much. The remaining few are either of extremely low quality or classified as "loss."

For more information on Federal Government grades for eggs see *Consumers Look at Eggs,* published by the Consumers' Counsel Division of the AAA, and for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., for 10 cents a copy.

●

A CONNECTICUT consumer brings up two questions apropos our recent article on buying laundering equipment (in our issue of February 28, 1938). First, he asks whether any metals used in making hand-operated and automatic irons are actually "scratchproof."

No metals used for this purpose are absolutely immune to scratching; all vary in their resistance to abrasives. One Government expert states that ironers are most frequently made of plated steel which, if cared for properly, is "moderately scratchproof." Chrome plated steel, highly resistant to scratching, is sometimes used, but more often is restricted to decorative purposes.

Second question has to do with our statement that ironers, when beginning to heat, should be rubbed lightly with paraffin or beeswax to "prevent scorching." We hasten to correct our misstatement that this treatment is an anti-scorching one. The process is recom-

mended, *not* to prevent scorching, but as a safeguard against the iron sticking to the fabric on which it is placed.

This reader also wants more information on the tests for irons and toasters suggested in the "Crusade for Facts" article in the same issue. The article said that the heating efficiency of irons could be tested by placing them on sheets of blotting paper and then heating for ten minutes. A similar test was suggested for toasters in which each toaster should be heated for half a minute and bread then inserted for a minute. By comparing the mark left by the irons on the blotting paper in the first case, and the relative "doneness" of the toast in the other, it is possible to get, not a scientifically accurate measure of relative heating efficiency of different makes, but a fairly good indication of it.

If the "footprints" of a particular iron are evenly blackened to a dark shade, the evidence is that the iron heats rapidly and distributes the heat evenly. Well-made irons with high wattage ratings (800 to 1,000 watts) meet this standard. On the other hand, a lighter footprint means the iron heats more slowly due either to a lower wattage or to a thicker ironing surface. If the footprint is dark in one spot and light in another, the iron does not distribute the heat evenly. Such irons are not desirable unless the hotter part is at the front of the ironing surface. If irons of equal wattages are compared, the experiment will result in a better key to the relative efficiency.

What holds for the heating capacity and heat distribution of irons holds likewise for toasters. The best toasters will brown bread evenly.

These tests are designed solely to test the speed of heating and the evenness of heat distribution of the irons and toasters. They are not planned to show actual dollar-values of the many kinds of irons and toasters sold over the counter.

Remember also that age has much to do with the heating efficiency of irons and toasters. Testing a varied assortment of the electric appliances of different ages will not indicate the efficiency of the various makes when they are all new.

HEATING 15 different irons on blotting paper for 10 minutes in a household test resulted in this array of "footprints." The first 5 irons and No. 11 were 600–660 watts, the rest 1,000 watts. The blacker the footprint, the more even its shading, and sharp its outline . . . the greater the heating efficiency of the iron.

●

A NEW YORK reader, referring to zeolite water softeners, mentioned in our article, "Through the Wash," in our March 14, 1938, issue, asks: "Will you please advise me where details of construction of this softener are given? Where can you get the zeolite? How is it operated?"

The best place to get plans for making zeolite water softeners for the home is from manufacturers of the zeolite itself. Their names and addresses can be obtained from trade directories available in any large library. The Farm Water Supply and Sewage Division of the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering, Department of Agriculture, and the National Bureau of Standards, Department of Commerce, both have lists of zeolite manufacturers on file which they will furnish on written request.

Farmers' Bulletin No. 1448, "Farmstead Water Supply," obtainable for 5 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C., devotes a few pages to a description of zeolite water softeners and says that they can be installed in the home for less than $200, with a very small operating cost. A technical book on water supplies, "Boiler Feed-Water Purification," by S. T. Powell, also has an informative chapter on the structure and operation of zeolite water softeners. The National Lime Association, Washington, D. C., publishes a free bulletin on "Water Supply and Treatment" (No. 211) which discusses zeolites.

A zeolite softens water by exchanging sodium for calcium and magnesium (which "harden water") when water is passed through it. The sodium must be replenished from time to time by adding a 10 percent solution of common table salt to the zeolite. But before such a softener can be operated, a trained chemist must analyze the water supply to determine what the thickness and the surface area of the zeolite should be to function efficiently.

Prunes for Small Budgets

Superabundant in supply, lower in price, prunes woo consumer favor even in a fresh fruit season

THE POOR PRUNE has taken another bump on the market, but the prune's tragedy presents a whacking good opportunity for consumers to lay in a supply of rich red blood. With every wrinkle in the prune carrying a charge of three vitamins, A, B, and G, a shot of iron, a dash of copper, and a capsule of quick energy in the form of sugar, a prune surplus with lower prune prices should be a signal for consumers to get out and store up on this dried fruit even though it is fresh-fruit season in most consumer markets.

A superabundant harvest of 247 thousand tons of prunes in 1937 has put wrinkles in the faces of prune-growers, forced them to call in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration for help, and at the same time has sent retail prune prices down lower than they have been since they went into the price cellar in 1932. Selling on retail markets today at an average of slightly more than 9 cents a pound they are now bringing farmers just about half of what they brought in 1929.

It takes a correct 8-year guess to come out on top in prune growing, weather being beneficent. Prune trees don't produce in commercial quantities until they are 8 years old. A depression and a failure of prune consumption to keep up with prune production has resulted during the last 5 years in a curious economic situation in which prune production goes up while returns to prune growers go down.

Approaching the prune problem from two directions the Agricultural Adjustment Administration during the last few years, first has relieved pressure on prices by buying up prunes for distribution to relief families through the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation. Then through the Prune Credit Corporation, an organization of prune producers which is financed by Federal loans, it seeks to divert substandard prunes into other consumer channels.

Prune butter as a bread spread—already popular abroad—is being suggested to housewives. Brandy is another possible destination for the humble prune. But the new use that gives most promise of coming to the rescue is the prune riding to market as a prune granule. The prune granule is a very dry piece of prune pulp, rice-like in size, popcorn-like in shape. Soaked in water for a few minutes it is ready for a major role in any kitchen adventure. Bakers use prune granules to flavor bread and cakes. Kitchen playwrights cast them for parts in prune whips, ice cream, prune milk shakes, jams, and pies.

University of California experiments have turned up the prune nut which looks like grape nuts, has a fruity flavor. It is suggested as a breakfast dish to be served with milk or cream. Prune pulp is taking its place in baby's diets, and finally the traditional boiled prune still holds its own in most households.

Prudent buyers who keep one eye on the budget keep the other on the label when they buy prunes. "Moisture added" means they're delicious eaten raw, but if the prunes are to be soaked and cooked, the dry fruit is a better investment. The smaller the prune, the cheaper the prune; but in buying small prunes consumers should remember that small ones have more seeds in proportion to pulp. On the question of large versus small prunes, however, an investigation has shown that very large prunes at 35 cents a pound are more than three times as expensive in actual cost of prune pulp than small prunes at 10 cents a pound. Large prunes are no more tasty than small prunes.

ON THE SPOT

[*Concluded from page 5*]

pure ammonium hydroxide. Do not use ordinary household ammonia. For delicate fabrics dilute to half strength.

Potassium permanganate (bleach). Mark poison. Buy potassium permanganate from drugstore in crystal form. Prepare solution by dissolving one teaspoonful of crystals in a pint of water. Apply to stain with medicine dropper, allowing it to remain on fabric for about five minutes. It will leave a brown stain which on linen, cotton, and silk should be bleached out with oxalic acid, on wool by peroxide of hydrogen. Rinse material thoroughly.

Oxalic acid solution (bleach). Mark poison. Use for removing brown stains left by potassium permanganate used on cotton, linen, or silk. Buy from drugstore in crystal form. Dissolve as many crystals as possible in lukewarm water. Keep in tightly corked bottle. Apply with medicine dropper or glass rod. Never allow it to dry on fabric. Rinse first and then neutralize acid with solution of ammonia. Always rinse material thoroughly.

Javelle water (bleach) will remove color and will injure silk and wool, but is excellent for some stains on white cotton and linen. Make by dissolving ½ pound of washing soda in one quart of cold water. Then add ¼ pound of chloride of lime. Filter to remove sediment. Bottle clean liquid in tightly closed bottles. Javelle water should not remain in contact with a fabric for more than a minute. Use bowl method, applying fluid by medicine dropper. Always neutralize spot with dilute acid solution and rinse material thoroughly.

Acetic acid solution—for neutralizing Javelle water. Make by adding 2 tablespoons of a 5 percent solution of acetic acid to a quart of water. After use—rinse material thoroughly.

Hydrogen peroxide—Buy hydrogen peroxide used for medical purposes, alkalize it just before using with a few drops of ammonia. Apply with medicine dropper or glass rod. This mild bleach may be used on silk and wool as well as cotton and linen. It affects some colors and should always be tried before using it on dyed materials. Always rinse material carefully in water.

Glycerine—for tea and coffee and fresh peach stains.

Carbon tetrachloride—grease solvent, noninflammable.

Turpentine—removes paint stains.

Hydrosulphites (bleach) particularly good for removing dye stains. Comes in powdered form. Keep in dry tightly closed cans and do not moisten until ready to use. Then the powder may be moistened and worked directly on the stain, or may be dissolved in water—one teaspoonful to a cup of water. These compounds are especially good in removing a great many stains that are not greasy in nature.

Use on colored materials only after experimenting. Treatment on colored fabrics must be very rapid and the material must always be rinsed thoroughly.

Fuller's earth (absorbent).

STARTING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES TO MARKET

[*Concluded from page 11*]

tional grapefruit crop. Another company shipped 10 percent of the fresh grapes distributed in 1935. However, a cooperative, the California Fruit Exchange, marketed 12 percent of the fresh grapes in 1935 for its grower members.

Oranges were another fruit in which cooperatives ran ahead of private distributors. Three cooperative associations alone marketed 63 percent of all the oranges distributed fresh in 1935.

Growers themselves have attempted to solve their problems through cooperation, but in many cases in fruits and vegetables they have eventually had to seek government assistance. Difficulty in making cooperative control work lies in the fact that most fruits and vegetables are so widely produced and many are so interchangeable that each grower in each area is a competitor of many other producers in many other localities.

Growers cooperative organizations in the fresh fruit and vegetable field are most important in marketing of citrus fruits and cranberries. In 1934 about 57 percent of all citrus fruits, including lemons, nearly two-thirds of the cranberries, 16 percent of the grapes, and 7 percent of the apples were distributed by cooperatives. "Largest and strongest cooperatives," reports the Commission, "handle single products, or groups of products produced in a few specialized areas, or in areas where the products have some distinguishing characteristics." The Commission could find no appreciable difference in the prices received by cooperative growers and those received by non-cooperators, but cooperators have the additional benefits of patronage returns and investments in cooperative plants which the other groups did not have.

Where they are successful, cooperatives perform a number of very useful services for growers. For growers of particular commodities they warehouse crops, finance them, cooperatively purchase supplies for growers, meet surplus problems by processing fruits and vegetables, give market information, give technical advice on growing crops, attend to traffic details, and take care of legal business. In addition, by the use of grades, cooperative brands, and by advertising, they have been able to create special demand for their members' products.

Fruit and vegetable marketing problems have brought into existence an ingenious economic arrangement, the marketing agreement. Beginning with the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 when the marketing agreement method was first put forward this device has been improved each year.

Present marketing agreements under the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 provide that whenever the Secretary of Agriculture finds that the purposes of the Act can be forwarded by a marketing agreement covering a particular commodity in a particular region he may call a public hearing. If, after the hearing, the handlers of 50 percent of a commodity in a region sign an agreement and two-thirds of the producers in that region approve of the issuance of an order embodying the provisions of the agreement, the Secretary may issue an order laying down certain marketing regulations. All handlers are then required to abide by the terms of the "order" issued. In cases where the handlers cannot

come to an agreement but where two-thirds of the growers want an order the Secretary of Agriculture, with the approval of the President of the United States, may promulgate one. Fruits and vegetables (except olives and asparagus) for canning do not come under the Act, but all fresh fruits and vegetables do, except apples, as well as certain other agricultural commodities.

Marketing agreements aim to prevent alternate gluts and scarcities by limiting the amount of shipments during any one week, or during a specified period. They may also limit the amount of products that goes to market during a season. They may divert surplus fruits and vegetables to new uses or new markets. Occasionally produce is withheld for short periods from the market in what are called shipping holidays, to allow overstocked terminals time in which to clear up excess supplies.

COOPERATIVE STRUCTURE

[Concluded from page 14]

Education and propaganda for the cooperative movement head up sometimes in the wholesales; sometimes in Leagues, which are purely educational bodies; and in the Cooperative League of the U. S. A.

Regional leagues coordinate educational activities of the wholesales in their territory, and supply educational materials. They aid in the organization of cooperative schools to train employees, and in running recreational and educational institutes for members and their families and for youth groups. They collect factual data. They represent the cooperative movement on legislative and judicial fronts.

There are only 3 full-fledged regional leagues in the country. They are subdivisions of the national League, though they cover only parts of the cooperative map. Oldest is the Northern States Cooperative League, founded in 1922 and now serving retail societies and 2 wholesales in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Michigan and Wisconsin. The Eastern Cooperative League has headquarters in New York City, the Central States Cooperative League in Chicago.

Two district leagues in California, one with offices in Pasadena, the other in Oakland, are still in an early stage of development. They include many individual members along with stores and buying clubs.

Between the local retail co-ops and the leagues, there are often federations of co-ops in more compact areas. These federations have in some localities developed from purely educational functions to the joint purchase of goods and a widening variety of business services for their members. The Range Cooperative Federation does a buying job for 23 local societies in the Mesaba Range country of Minnesota. Its member co-ops are at the same time affiliated both with the Northern States Cooperative League and the Central Cooperative Wholesale. Many of the newer federations unite the co-ops in a single metropolitan area. Chicago, greater Boston, the District of Columbia, Cincinnati, are examples.

Along with their buying services, wholesales do much of the educational and publicity work of the cooperative movement. Training of employees and auditing of books of member societies are services frequently offered by the wholesales—partly in self-protection. A number of co-op wholesales publish bi-weekly or monthly magazines.

Most of the regional wholesales provide the only central cooperative educational services in their sections of the country.

While wholesales are capital stock associations, the leagues are non-stock associations, financed by dues from the local societies. Dues are sometimes on a basis of membership alone; sometimes on a basis of membership and volume of trade.

Spokesman of the national cooperative movement in this country, and clearing-house for its educational activities, is the Cooperative League of the U. S. A. Affiliated with the League are 5 regional and district leagues, a cooperative national woman's guild, and 21 cooperative business associations. Among the latter are a majority of the regional wholesales, the 2 inter-regional wholesales, and a variety of organizations, including a dairy, a mail order cooperative, the Cooperative Recreation Service. Preponderant position of farmers in the American cooperative movement is reflected in the League membership of 11 farmers' associations, 7 of which are sponsored by 3 major farm organizations.

Education is the central purpose of the national League. The task of the national League is to unify activity and prevent duplication, to bring to each organization the results of experience by other groups, and give national direction to a variety of local efforts.

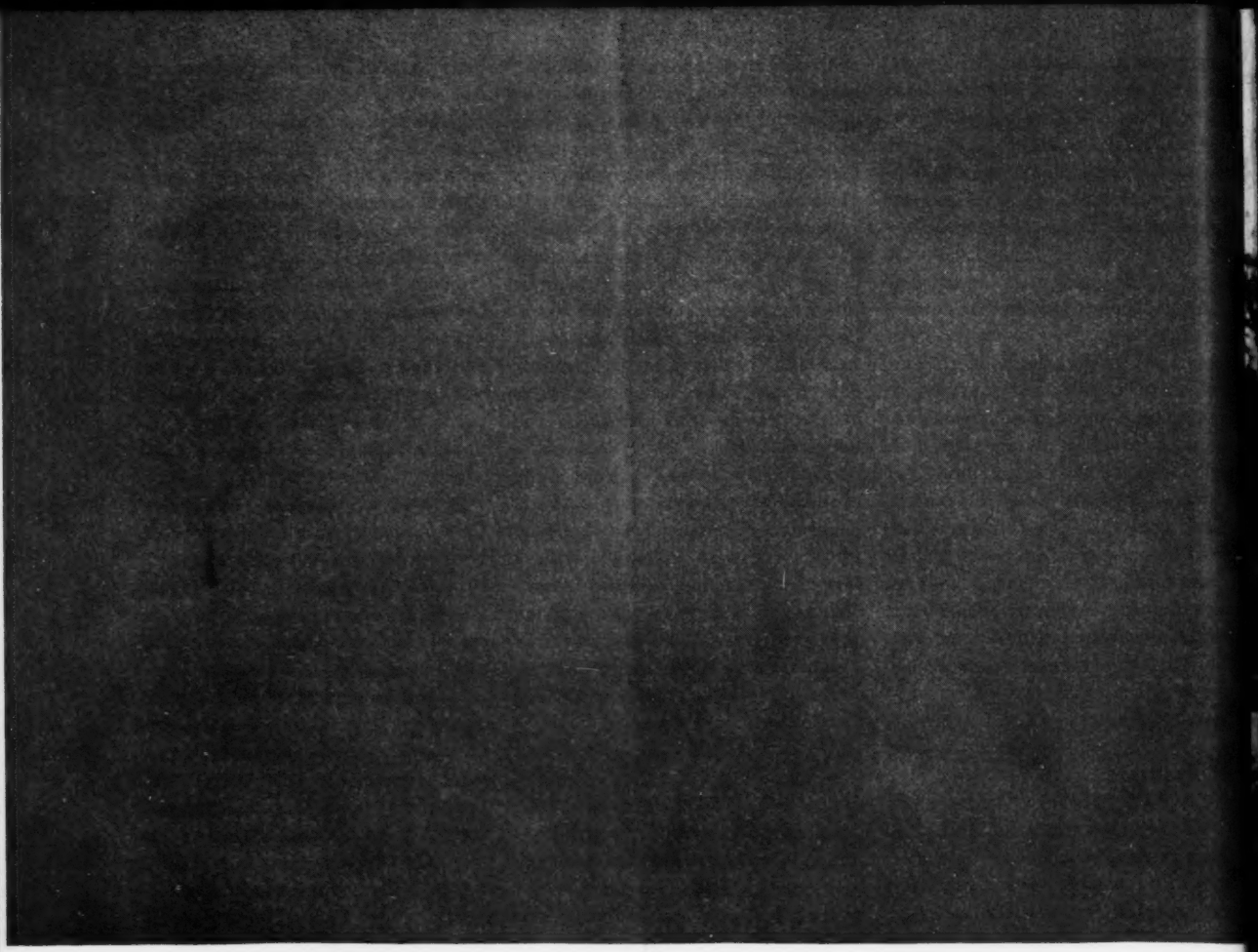
A national magazine, *Consumers' Cooperation,* appears each month. A news service goes out each week.

Specialized services of the League include an auditing bureau to improve cooperative accounting practice, and to aid local societies in their bookkeeping; a design service, for posters, packaging, display; and an insurance service, which—among other things—bonds cooperative employees. The League's two most recently established divisions are a medical bureau, to promote cooperative medicine; and a Co-op College which has just graduated its second class of prospective cooperative employees and executives.

Once every two years the Cooperative League holds a National Congress. Last one was held in Columbus, Ohio, in 1936; the next one takes place in North Kansas City, Missouri, this October.

America's Cooperative League is itself a member of the International Cooperative Alliance, which is made up of the national consumers' wholesales and farmers' national federations of some 40 countries, with an estimated membership of 100 million people. Headquarters are in London.

Membership in a league or wholesale affiliated with the Cooperative League of the U. S. A., or directly with the League, is a certain test of whether an organization calling itself a consumer cooperative is a genuine cooperative. Not every bona fide cooperative is thus connected with the League. But any co-op which has the connection may be assumed to be operating under recognized cooperative principles.



IN THIS ISSUE

MAY 9, 1938 • VOLUME V, NUMBER 3

On the Spot 3

Starting Fruits and Vegetables to Market . . 9

Cooperative Structure 12

Consumers' Mailbox 15

Prunes for Small Budgets 17

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 64140